HINTS FOR THE GARDEN.

(1) *The Carnation Year Book,* 1910. Edited by J. S. Brunton. The official organ of the Perpetual Flowering Carnation Society. Pp. 53. Price 1*s.*

(2) *Gardening Difficulties Solved. Expert Answers to Amateurs' Questions.* Edited by H. H. Thomas. Pp. 160. (London: Cassell and Co., Ltd., 1910.) Price 1*s.* net.

(3) *Leitfaden für gärtnerische Pflanzenzuchtung.* By M. Löbner. Pp. vii+160. (Jena: Gustav Fischer, 1909.) Price 1.50 marks.

(4) *Wild Flowers and How to Identify Them.* By H. Friend. Pp. 64. (London: Robert Culley, 1910.) Price 1*s.* net.

THE popularity of the carnation as a florist's flower has already been enhanced by the spread of the American or perpetual flowering carnation, and will become more so as the qualities of this type are more generally recognised. Originally raised in France where they were known as "remontants," their value was not realised until American growers took up their cultivation with excellent results. Only within the last decade have British horticulturists entered the field, but sufficient growers were found in 1906 to form the society which offers the "Carnation Year Book" (1) as its official organ. One important object of the society is to undertake the registration of new varieties; about a dozen have so far been registered, including the already famous Britannia and Mrs. H. Burnett, as compared with about 800 recognised by the corresponding American society. The volume contains several short articles, of which the most interesting deal with cultivation and hybridisation.

(2) Amateur gardeners do not lack opportunities for obtaining assistance in their difficulties, as all the gardening papers are prepared to supply expert advice. The brochure edited by Mr. Thomas has been collated from replies to correspondents inserted in the columns of the *Gardener.* The questions cover a wide field, so that, although they are grouped in sections, it is a small chance that any specific matter for which the book is consulted will be mentioned therein. So far as it goes, the information is sound and practical, and some practical hints are conveyed in the illustrations.

(3) The perusal of Herr Löbner's book has afforded much pleasure and instruction, as it provides a successful combination of scientific teaching and practical experience. The book consists of a general part dealing with the acquisition of new plants by selection, hybridisation, importation, grafting, and sports—here limited to vegetative anomalies—and a special part in which the origin of specific novelties is treated. It is only possible in the limited space to note that the author discusses seed-fixation, the means of getting seed from double flowers, fertile and infertile hybrids, and the keeping qualities of pollen. In the latter part no section is more interesting than that on roses which includes some account of the author's experience.

(4) The arrangement for identifying British plants offered by Mr. Friend is, to all intents and purposes, the Linnean system, with the omission of many genera; species are only cited for eight genera, and then partially. The notes on season, habitat, and structure provide but little help towards identification, especially as no clear definition is given for some of the technical terms, *e.g.* fruit, bract, and stipule; further, there is a singular confusion on p. 32 of bulb and root, corm and tuber.

OUR BOOK SHELF.

The Telegraphic Transmission of Photographs. By T. Thorne Baker. Pp. xi+146. (London: Constable and Co., Ltd., 1910.) Price 2*s.* 6*d.* net.

THOSE who look at the illustrated papers, and especially readers of *The Daily Mirror,* are aware that the telegraphic transmission of photographs has already entered the commercial stage, and if the results are not yet all that can be desired it will generally be admitted that they reach a high standard of merit considering the very numerous difficulties that have had to be surmounted. This little book from the pen of Mr. Thorne Baker, who has been carrying out the work for *The Daily Mirror* during the last two-and-a-half years, is consequently very welcome.

A brief historical survey of the earlier work is given, and a more detailed account of the later work of Prof. Korn, M. Belin, and the author, which has resulted in the development of systems of actual commercial value. One is impressed throughout by the number of small difficulties which have had to be overcome by persevering experiment, and it is evident that the present state of the art owes its perfection considerably to the development of the kindred arts of photography and reproduction without which the advances on the purely electrical side would have been of slight avail. Problems such as this, though theoretically simple of solution, present great difficulties on account of the amount of technical skill and knowledge of a number of different subjects that is required.

The book is well written and illustrated. A good deal will only be understood by the technical reader fairly well equipped with electrical knowledge, but there is sufficient simple description to enable the non-technical reader to acquire a very fair idea of the whole subject. Some of the phototelegrams which are reproduced are excellent, especially when looked at from a sufficient distance to render the "grain" indistinct, and the two sketches transmitted by wireless telegraphy, though poor in themselves, afford evidence of still further possibilities of development.

M. S.

Liste des Observatoires Magnétiques et des Observatoires Séismologiques. By E. Merlin and O. Somville. Pp. x+192. (Brussels: Havez, Rue de Louvain, 112, 1910.)

To those who seek to establish definite relationships between solar and terrestrial phenomena, the multiplication of well-distributed stations equipped for the observation of terrestrial magnetism and earth movements is a hopeful sign. Hitherto, one of the grave difficulties encountered in such researches has been the paucity of trustworthy and continuous data for sufficiently long periods.

The list now published leads us to hope that a future generation may be more fortunate, for here we find some 220 observatories, of which at least eighty are devoted to the study of terrestrial magnetism and electricity.

The usefulness of such a list has been proved, in principle, by the publication of a similar list of astronomical observatories in 1907, and the Royal Ob-

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servatory of Belgium, under the auspices of which both were prepared and published, is to be congratulated upon having performed an exceedingly useful, if tedious, duty.

As any attempt to separate magnetism and seismology would have led to needless duplication and confusion, the arrangement is purely alphabetical. For each station are given the geographical position, the altitude, the nature of the ground on which the observatory stands, the publications wherein the results appear, the names of the staff, a brief history of the observatory, and the nature and distance of any disturbing elements, such as tramways, &c., and, finally, a description of the instruments and the special researches to which they are dedicated. Other lists show the continental and national distribution of the two kinds of observatories, and, alphabetically, the names of the observers.

Such a list was to have been prepared by the International Commission for Terrestrial Magnetism, but the project failed; the data then collected, however, have been placed at the service of the compilers of the present work, and have proved very useful.

W. E. R.

An Inconsistent Preliminary Objection against Positivism. By Prof. Robert Ardigo. Translated by Emilio Gavirati. Pp. 52. (Cambridge: W. Heffer and Sons, Ltd., 1910.) Price 1*s.* net.

This pamphlet, by the veteran leader of Italian positivism, is issued in translation by a devoted admirer and disciple who wishes to find an English helper in the translation and publication of other works by the "great master." Its argument is directed against those opponents who, on behalf of modern idealism, contend that in positivism there is to be found this fundamental fault—namely, that, according to the method which the positivist has prescribed to himself, the subject ought, in his system, to become an object which cannot have, therefore, any of the characteristics belonging to subjectiveness. Prof. Ardigo, as St. George to the dragon of metaphysics, develops a subtle and closely reasoned argument for a positivist treatment of psychology, criticising the positions associated with the names of Bergson and Boutroux. He is also careful to show that positivism differs widely from materialism, with which there is—very naturally—a tendency to confound it. The substance of this pamphlet is contained in the second part of volume x. of Ardigo's "Philosophical Works."

Analytical Chemistry. By Prof. F. P. Treadwell. Authorised translation from the German by William T. Hall. Vol. ii. Quantitative Analysis. Second edition. Pp. x+787. (New York: John Wiley and Sons; London: Chapman and Hall, Ltd., 1910.) Price 17*s.* net.

A review of the first edition of Mr. Hall's translation of Prof. Treadwell's work on quantitative analysis was published in Nature of August 11, 1904 (vol. lxx., p. 341). In the present issue certain additions have been made which are not found in the German text, and the main part of the work has been compared with the fourth German edition.

Students' Life and Work in the University of Cambridge. Two lectures by Prof. Karl Breul. Revised edition. Pp. 60. (Cambridge: Bowes and Bowes, 1910.) Price 1*s.* net.

The two lectures delivered by Prof. Karl Breul to the students attending the University Extension summer meeting in 1908 give an interesting and informative account of the life and work of Cambridge undergraduates. In the revised edition a few corrections and additions have been made.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

[The Editor does not hold himself responsible for opinions expressed by his correspondents. Neither can he undertake to return, or to correspond with the writers of, rejected manuscripts intended for this or any other part of Nature. *No notice is taken of anonymous communications.]*

Early Burial Customs in Egypt.

All who are interested in the serious attempts that are being made to reconstruct the real history of ancient Egypt and to sift established truth from wild conjecture must deplore Prof. Flinders Petrie's attempt (see Nature of September 29, p. 401) to revivify the corpse of a belief in the supposition that the archaic Egyptians were in the habit of cutting up their dead, a view which has been so effectually hanged, drawn, and quartered during the last ten years.

When Prof. Petrie states (*op. cit.*, p. 401, quoted from *Man*, September) that "it has long been known that in prehistoric burials the corpse was stripped of its flesh, the bones even being broken to extract the marrow," he should have written that he and M. de Morgan had *stated* that the prehistoric Egyptians dissected the bodies of their dead. But, even though Profs. Maspero, Sayce, Wiedemann, and Lortet repeated these or similar statements (Sayce and Lortet invoking the aid of birds of prey to do the bone-cleaning!), the experience gained by other excavators has totally shattered and destroyed every scrap of evidence that could lend any support to the belief in the reality of such practices.

In 1896 Prof. Petrie ("Naqada and Ballas," p. 32) attempted to explain the disturbed condition of the skeletons found in many archaic Egyptian graves by saying "*that bodies were sometimes—with all respect—cut up and partly eaten*"!

Four years later Dr. George A. Reisner proved that such disturbances of the bones as Prof. Petrie mentioned were the result of the operations of grave-plunderers (see the Egyptian Exploration Fund's Archæological Report for 1900–1, p. 25); and every year since then this explanation has been proved to be true in every case where disturbances have been found amongst many thousands of burials of all ages and in every part of Egypt and Nubia, which have been submitted to the most thorough and critical examination, not only by Dr. Reisner himself, but also of many independent witnesses. The evidence referring to Nubia is set forth *in extenso* in the First Annual Report of the Archæological Survey of Nubia, which is being published in Cairo this month. During my ten years' association with Dr. Reisner, my collaborators in the anatomical branch of the work and I have examined and made notes on the remains of more than 15,000 human beings buried in the Nile Valley, and we have not seen a single case which afforded any evidence whatsoever of the practices postulated by Prof. Petrie.

Secondary burials, of course, occurred in ancient Egypt: but they were exceedingly rare, probably more so than in modern England. Perhaps some archæologist of the next millennium will find infinitely more evidence in English graveyards of the twentieth century in support of speculations on our "customs of mutilation of corpses and cannibalism" than Prof. Petrie has been able to gather in Egypt.

It would, indeed, be a matter for astonishment if such a people as the ancient Egyptians, whose respect for their dead is proverbial, did not attempt to restore to order the graves of relatives that had been desecrated by grave-plunderers. The surprising thing is not that we find instances of reburial, but that they are so exceedingly rare.

During the Græco-Roman period in Egypt and Nubia, when the decadence of the art of mummification had definitely begun, it often happened that bodies handed over to the embalmers were treated in such a careless manner that they fell to pieces in an early stage of the process, and had to be rebuilt—sometimes with limb-bones reversed, leg-bones as skeletons for arms, portions of other skeletons introduced, and often foreign materials added. This "faking" of mummies is described in detail in the forthcoming Report of the Archæological Survey of Nubia.

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